

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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To: ENRP Co-Chairs Bradley Erck & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Transportation Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse

Re: March & April 2002 meetings

Date: April 26, 2002

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Transportation Subcommittee met March 22 and April 19, 2002 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott. Present for the March meeting were subcommittee members Morse, Ferraro, Lehman, Meckler (proxy), and Wendel, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein. Present for the April meeting were subcommittee members Morse, Ferraro, Meckler (proxy), Schroeder, and Wendel.

CSX Railroad

Rail transportation and commodity flows are a subcommittee focus in 2002. Previously, government and shipper concerns were addressed through regular meetings between CSX and Erie and Niagara Counties. Following the resolution of those immediate concerns, CSX "left the table" and has discontinued their meetings with the counties. It has been at least a year since the last meeting and issues such as infrastructure needs, Amtrak service, and additional shipping issues, however, remain. Niagara County has recently completed an infrastructure inventory, and Erie is in the process of doing so. For these reasons, it would be beneficial to bring CSX back to the table and continue the dialogue. **The Transportation Subcommittee is seeking approval for the Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership to recommend that the Erie and Niagara County Legislatures pass a resolution asking CSX to return to a schedule of regular meetings with the two counties.**

Cross Border Planning

Following the successful Harris-Pataki Ontario-New York Economic Summit in 2001, efforts to improve economic linkage have focused on a development of a comprehensive transportation strategy. A steering committee for the effort has been established and a recent meeting on April 18 identified several areas for immediate action including:

- Preparation of an integrated, GIS formatted base map for Western New York and Southern Ontario to identify existing infrastructure and planned improvements

- Integration of traffic models on both sides of the border to forecast traffic at all four international bridges
- Identify improvements to increase border efficiency while maintaining the increased security implemented since 9-11.
- Creation of a BiNational Transportation Investment Strategy Action Plan with elements for major highway improvements, rail freight and passenger needs, and cross lake ferry services. The steering committee is meeting again in two months, and looks to have its work done by fall.

Transportation Enhancement Projects

A handout was distributed of the GBNRTC's final ranking of regional transportation enhancement projects that will be competing for dollars statewide. These projects are eligible for set aside funding for bicycle, walking, and other types of enhancements. Selected projects will be announced in Albany this June. Following the allocation of the federal dollars the GBNRTC will look for alternate methods of funding for any projects not selected. The handout is attached to this subcommittee report.

Other Topics

Other topics discussed included bike trail signage, a shuttle between downtown Buffalo and ski country, the Buffalo-Niagara Tourist Express, Continental One, the bi-county regional planning effort, the evolving shoreline corridor bike trail, the high speed rail study, the dual purpose of roads and municipalities' failure to plan for both movement of traffic and access to properties, homeland security, and linking urban workers to suburban jobs through public transportation.